

The Chastleton, Washington, D.C. November 12, 1939

Dear Miss Tarbell:-

I wonder if I am presuming too far in hoping you recollect my insignificant self. I had met you in New York at the Pen and Bash and elsewhere but I think the last time I saw you was when Mr. Sanford drove me over from Redding Ridge one Sunday afternoon some years ago and you were very gracious and we chatted under the trees and you showed me your delightful old house.

So I am venturing to write now and tell you what a happy experience I have had in reading your Autobiography. I have just finished it and enjoyed it all and especially after I had found you too had studied Steele's Fourteen Weeks books, that you also took away the memory

of the Corliss engine as your chief souvenir
of the Centennial Exposition--and that you
save the string that comes around parcels;
(I wonder if you are a miser about wrapping
paper, too. I am!)

I won't impose on you too many details
of the special points I enjoyed in the book.
I knew Mr. McClure, who came to see my mother
in Springfield back in 1885 and when he found
she had left town inquired eagerly if I could
not write for him. At that time I had never
written a line for publication but later I
did housekeeping articles for his syndicate.

But the main thing which touches me most
deeply is your point of view as to old age.
I celebrated my eightieth birthday last June,
but I don't believe it. How can I be as old
as that and feel young inside?

A quotation from St Paul comes often to my mind. He said that the more the outward man perishes the more the inner man is renewed day by day. I daresay he meant spiritually and I can't flatter myself I resemble him in that respect. But I do find my interest in persons and things and causes does not diminish now in the period when the grasshopper of any kind should be a burden. On the contrary I find life and its contents absorbing and I am questioning when I shall begin to grow old. I grieve to say that I am rather lame, (though I have no pain) and this rather cramps my style (forgive the slang) in some ways, but I don't have to think with my legs and I know few persons who get so much out of life.

So you see how it encourages me that you, who are eighteen months ahead of me on the great pilgrimage, still find zest in life and what it holds. That is one reason I am writing to you--to thank you from my heart for enjoyment and for stimulus. May your mental shadow never grow less!--and I know it will not.

Sincerely and gratefully yours,

(Mrs. J. F. Herriek)

Christine Peckham Herriek